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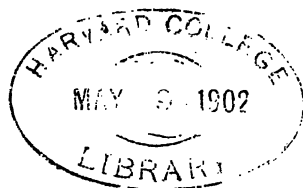
MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S
DEFENCE OF THE
BRITISH TROOPS IN
SOUTH AFRICA
AGAINST
THE FOREIGN SLANDERS.

(REPRINTED FROM "THE STANDARD.")

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1902

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Fine money.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

IN the course of a speech delivered at a great Unionist gathering at Edinburgh on Friday, October 25th, 1901, Mr. Chamberlain said :—

I go on to a complaint which perhaps is more serious, that we, the Government, have not pressed forward this war with sufficient vigour. I do not think I have ever been afraid of admitting an error that has been committed. But before I can deal with this charge, let me know against whom it is directed. Is it directed against the Government, the civilian administration, or is it directed against our military advisers? If it is directed against the Government in its civilian capacity, then all I can say is that I hope no Government will ever be found in this country that will take the details of military operations out of the hands of the military authorities (cheers). We are responsible for their selection. We are responsible so long as we continue to employ them, and if it were charged against us that we had ignored their advice, that we had failed to give them the assistance and the confidence which they desired, I should say it was a serious charge (hear, hear). But it is a charge which could not be truly made. You have heard from many speakers before me, and it is the fact that we have given everything that has been asked for in the way of troops, of supplies, of reinforcements. But there is another charge which does undoubtedly affect the Government—it is that we have been too lenient towards our opponents (hear, hear). It is that we have not dealt with the rebels or with the guerrilla bands with sufficient severity. That is our responsibility; that is the policy of the Government which is questioned. There is no question which has given us greater anxiety, more serious consideration,

I think that the time has come—is coming—when measures of greater severity may be necessary (hear, hear, and cheers), and if that time comes we can find precedents for anything that we may do in the action of those nations who now criticise our “barbarity” and “cruelty,” but whose example in Poland, in the Caucasus, in Algeria, in Tonquin, in Bosnia, in the Franco-German War we have never even approached (applause).

COUNT VON BÜLOW'S ATTACK.

Count Von Bülow, the Imperial Chancellor, speaking in the German Reichstag on January 8th, 1902, retaliated on Mr. Chamberlain in the following words:—

The last speaker (Count Von Stolberg) alluded in his remarks to the reference which a British Minister made some time ago to the conduct of the German Army in the Franco-German War. I believe we shall all be agreed, and I think all sensible people in England, too, will agree with us, that when a Minister considers himself called on to justify his policy—and such a thing may happen—he does well to leave foreign countries out of the discussion (hear, hear). Should he, however, wish to adduce examples from abroad, it is advisable that he should proceed with great caution, for otherwise he runs the risk not only of being misunderstood, but also of hurting foreign feelings, even though it be—as I am ready to assume was the case in the present instance, and as, indeed, after the assurances made to me from the other side, I must assume—without any intention of doing so. This is, however, all the more regrettable when it happens in the case of a Minister, and with reference to a country which, as the previous speaker has rightly pointed out, has always entertained with his own good and friendly relations, the undisturbed continuance of which is equally to the interests of both parties (hear, hear). It is quite comprehensible that in a people which has become so thoroughly part and parcel of its glorious Army as the German people has—and the previous speaker very rightly emphasised this point—the general feeling of the nation

should revolt against any appearance of the heroic character and moral basis of our national struggle for unity being subject to misrepresentation. But the German Army stands much too high, and its escutcheon is too bright for them to be affected by warped judgments. Anything of the kind is well answered by the reply which Frederic the Great gave when he was told that somebody had been attacking him and the Prussian Army. "Let the man alone," said the great king, "and do not excite yourselves. He is biting at granite" (laughter and cheers).

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S DEFENCE.

HONOUR TO THE BRITISH TROOPS.

Mr. Chamberlain, taking advantage of the earliest opportunity of replying to Count von Bülow, made the following speech at the Annual Dinner of the Birmingham Jewellers' and Silver-smiths' Association, on January 11th. In answer to the toast of "His Majesty's Ministers," he said:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I thank you most sincerely for the way in which you have received this toast, and especially for the kind and personal welcome which you have given to me (applause). I am very glad to be once more amongst you; it is like a whiff of fresh air after the heated atmosphere of political controversy in which we have been engaged during the whole of the autumn. I see before me a great company of men entitled to represent the commercial interests, the mainstay of the country. None more than you are interested in the prosperity of the Empire, none are more likely to recognise its privileges and its obligations (hear, hear). No doubt you are divided amongst yourselves; some of you divided from me in matters of domestic policy; but I think that Mr. Middlemore was right in saying that, in any time of national stress, you would rally round the Executive of the day, the men who are the instruments of the national will and purpose. During the recess the Government of which I have the honour to be a member has been violently attacked. All Governments are violently attacked in their turn (hear, hear). But I admit I have

seen in late years a tendency which I regret, and which was certainly not present at the earlier period of my connection with politics—when men are not satisfied to discuss their political differences, to criticise public policy and public action, but descend to the meanness of attacking personal character and personal motive (hear, hear). Every crime in the calendar has been imputed to some, at any rate (laughter), of the members of this Government. If there were the shadow of a foundation for the worst of those charges, I should be unworthy to break bread with you, and, so far from toasting the Government, you ought to demand its instant impeachment. But, gentlemen, you have too much experience, you are too wise not to know that in all this vituperation there is a great deal of exaggeration and very little sincerity.

FOREIGN HOSTILITY.

In our politics there are always a certain number of estimable gentlemen who are out of office, and who have the laudable ambition to be in; and it is quite natural, under those circumstances, that they should be deeply sensible of the demerits of those who occupy the places which they desire to fill; and as they are generally too modest to extol their own virtues, they magnify our sins (applause). I do not complain. After some thirty years of a not inactive public life, and after six years of such excessive strain and labour as seldom fall to the lot of man, I would be—I speak of myself, and with the utmost sincerity—very glad indeed to make way for any of those alternative Governments that have been starring the provinces (loud laughter) during the recess, provided only I could be assured that any one of them would deal with great national issues, affecting the interests, the existence, of the country, on lines which would carefully safeguard those interests and the national honour (applause). Meanwhile, gentlemen, while I am waiting for this alternative Government, I desire to protest, with all earnestness, against those men who, in their partisan zeal, foul their own nests (hear, hear), encouraging the enemies of this country, furnishing material to foreign countries for the malignant libels which they utter against this country (applause). I under-

stand a good party fight. I myself am a party man. When I am struck I try to strike back again (loud laughter). But I cannot appreciate the position of those who are influenced by party passion, and not content with fighting the battle here at home on fair and reasonable lines, must go out of their way to impute methods of barbarism to our soldiers in the field (shame), to imply that His Majesty's Ministers, who are Britons like themselves, can, by any possibility, be guilty of deliberate cruelty and inhumanity, and who laud the Boers while they slander the Britons (hear, hear), and then profess to be astonished and surprised at the growing hostility of foreign nations (applause). They have helped to create the animosity which we all deplore (hear, hear). I am well aware that in some quarters this animosity is attributed to another cause. It is said to be due to the indiscreet oratory of the Colonial Secretary (laughter). Gentlemen, what I have said I have said (loud cheers). I withdraw nothing (great cheers). I qualify nothing (renewed cheers). I defend nothing. As I read history, no British Minister has ever served his country faithfully and at the same time enjoyed popularity abroad (cheers).

COUNT VON BÜLOW'S SPEECH.

I make allowance, therefore, for foreign criticism. I will not follow an example that has been set to me. I do not want to give lessons to a foreign Minister (hear, hear, and applause), and I will not accept any at his hands (loud cheers). I am responsible only to my own Sovereign and to my own countrymen (loud cheers). But I am ready to meet that form of criticism which is made at home (laughter and cheers), which is manufactured here (renewed laughter) for export (cheers and laughter) by the friends of every country but their own (cheers); and in reference to these I would ask you, gentlemen, how can it be due to a few words in a speech that was delivered only a few weeks ago that for months and for years, from the very beginning of this war, the foreign Press has teemed with abuse of this country? (cheers). How can the Colonial Secretary be made responsible for what Sir Edward

Grey has called the foul and filthy lies, for what Lord Rosebery has described as the vile and infamous falsehoods which have been disseminated in foreign countries without a syllable of protest, without the slightest interference by the responsible authorities? (cheers). No, gentlemen, my opponents must find some other scapegoat (cheers). They must look further for the causes of that feeling of hostility, which I do not think we have deserved, but which has existed more or less for a century, at least, which always comes to the surface when we are in any difficulty, but which I am glad to say has never done us any serious harm (hear, hear). I have seen it stated lately that this feeling is new, that when we came into office we found peace with honour, and that it should be the object of an alternative Government to bring about again the happy state of things which then existed.

THE RADICAL LEGACY.

Well, but, gentlemen, this is a travesty of history. If our predecessors believe that they were popular upon the Continent, I assure them they are suffering from a most extraordinary delusion (laughter). When they talk of peace with honour, I do not deny that we were at peace, but I assert that when we came into office we found six—at least six—burning questions of international importance which our predecessors had allowed to drift, and which were left to Lord Salisbury as an evil legacy. These questions were—I am not going to discuss them, I merely enumerate them—the question of Siam; the question of the boundary with Venezuela; the question of the Hinterlands of our West African possessions as it affected Germany and also as it affected France; the question of Samoa and of the Pacific Islands; and, lastly, the question of the French position upon the Nile. This Government which you are told is inept and feeble, this Government which has no ideas, which is worn out, has grappled, and grappled successfully, with all these questions (applause). They have been settled honourably and satisfactorily. Besides that, we have maintained British interests in the East, and we have disposed of a long-standing cause of difference with our American kinsfolk. We have agreed to a Treaty which will enable the immediate construction of an inter-oceanic canal, which will be,

I believe, of great advantage to the commerce of the world, as it will be to that of the United States of America. I might have included in my list the question of the Transvaal, for it is absurd not to recognise, in face of the information which is in everyone's possession, that the struggle between the Boer and the Briton for supremacy in South Africa had begun long before we assumed office (hear, hear). But, gentlemen, I say that these are solid achievements in the cause of peace, and if we be not able to remove the Continental prejudice—which has always existed, although it has never been more coarsely expressed—we have, at any rate, been able to settle some substantial differences which might have been the cause of international trouble and conflict. But I claim that we have done more than that. There is something more important to this country than the goodwill of foreign nations, although I do not wish to depreciate the importance of that.

THE UNITY OF THE EMPIRE.

But what is more important is the affection and the confidence of our kinsfolk across the seas (cheers). The losses in this war have been heavy. We have to deplore the loss of treasure, but that, to a nation like ours, is hardly worthy of consideration if the object is sufficiently important. We have to deplore, what is much more serious, the loss of some of our bravest, some of our most promising citizens. But even these losses, great as they are, in a war that is forced upon us—not sought by us, forced upon us by the aggression and the ambition of the Boers—even these losses, I say, have brought in their train one blessing of infinite and lasting importance. This war has enabled the British Empire to find itself. It has united the British race throughout the world (cheers). It has shown to all whom it may concern that if ever again we have, as we have done in the past, to fight for our very existence against a world in arms, we shall not be alone (cheers). We shall be supported by the sons of Britain in every quarter of the globe (cheers). I say that hardly any sacrifice can be too great for such a result. Fifty years ago, twenty years ago—I am not certain that I could not put it later—if anyone had ventured to predict that in a struggle in a distant part of the Empire, in a cause in which they had no direct, no personal interest, the great

nations of Canada and Australia, the people of New Zealand, would have come to our help, would have furnished us with an army of 20,000 men, fit to stand beside the best troops in the world, that they would send these men to fight for their King, and for the unity of the Empire of which they form a part (applause)—and, believe me, if the peril were greater, if we were indeed in serious danger, I believe there is hardly any limit which could be placed upon the assistance which would be afforded to us by these sister nations across the sea, who have learnt to feel that they are joint heirs with us of all the glories and the traditions of the Motherland, and who will never in the future leave her in the lurch (applause)—his predictions would have been received with a considerable amount of incredulity. Now, gentlemen, what response are we going to make to this admirable and astonishing outburst of loyalty and affection? Are we worthy of it? Can we rise to the height of an Empire not bounded by the limits of the United Kingdom, but embracing every man of British race in every part of the globe? (hear, hear). That is the policy of His Majesty's Government (applause). That is the Imperialism for which I ask the support of every patriotic Briton, irrespective altogether of his party ties (applause). Gentlemen, I venture to say that that policy is not one of feebleness or despair (hear, hear). It is not wanting in efficiency or in imagination (hear, hear, and a laugh).

COLONIAL OPINION.

As Colonial Secretary, it is my duty, it is my pleasure, to acquaint myself continually with the drift of Colonial opinion. You know that our Colonies are democratic in the best sense of the word—democratic in ideas, democratic in constitution—and they have had, in past years, at any rate, sentimental attraction to the older Liberalism which was in some sense, at any rate, responsible for the free institutions which they enjoy. But I want to warn the leaders of the New Liberalism, to whatever section they belong, that they are running a great risk of losing this sympathy (hear, hear). Mr. Seddon, the powerful and patriotic Prime Minister of New Zealand, in announcing the other day the furtherance of another draft of a thousand men to fight at the

front (cheers)—a draft, I believe, which has been since increased, for I am told there were three or four times as many applicants as there have been vacancies—Mr. Seddon made a statement which is full of pregnant meaning. He said that the reinforcements would not have been necessary had parties in this country been guided by patriotism (hear, hear), and had the opponents of the Government reserved their criticisms till a more fitting opportunity (cheers). In the last day or two I was reading a leading article in an influential Canadian paper, and the writer said that the tactics which were being pursued by the pro-Boers in this country were injuring the Empire abroad, were alienating Colonial sympathies, and destroying the unity which is our national safeguard. I have seen many similar statements in papers published in the Australian Colonies, and I find that they resent, as much as we do, the imputations of barbarity and inhumanity which are intended, no doubt, to damage the Government, but which strike the nation (cheers), and which strike our Colonists as well as ourselves (cheers). And then, in South Africa itself, the seat of this war, we find the loyalists of both races—for nothing would be more wrong than to connect loyalty exclusively with the question of race—we have among our Dutch fellow-subjects men as loyal to the Crown and the Empire as any of the British (cheers)—our loyal fellow-subjects of both races — “the self-called loyalists,” as Mr. Bryce sneeringly described them—the men who have suffered loss, who have borne hardship with hardly any complaint, who have sent 50,000 men to fight at the front for the supremacy of the British flag and for the unity of the British Empire (cheers)—these men who have earned your gratitude—the gratitude of every one who is worthy to be called a Briton—are naturally indignant when they find that their services are not appreciated, when they find that even in the hour of approaching victory the results of that victory are to be taken from them. Gentlemen, a new factor has entered into the politics of this country. In future you will have to take account of the opinion of your Colonists (cheers). You will have to consult them; and if you wish that they should always stand by your side you will have to be guided, to some extent at any rate, by their wishes and their aspirations.

PROGRESS OF THE WAR.

And when you hear wild and wilful talk about negotiations which are to be casually undertaken in some public-house on the Continent (laughter), when you are told even by high authority in this country that proclamations solemnly adopted at the suggestion of or with the subsequent approval of Colonial Governments are to be recalled in presence of the enemy, when you are advised to offer or to accept terms of peace which, in the words of that calm and resolute speech which was made by Lord Milner (loud cheers) two days ago—terms of peace which, in his words, would preserve the political dualism in Africa in substance although not in form—then I say to you remember that you do not stand alone, that you have allies, and that you are not entitled to make peace unless it is upon terms which will be satisfactory to those allies who have sent of their best to fight and to die in a common cause (applause). Meanwhile, gentlemen, the war goes on—slowly, no doubt, but inevitably—to its settled conclusion. There has been a great improvement in the situation during the recess. I can give no better instance of it than by informing you that the railways in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony are now working almost as in normal times. In the twelve months between June, 1900, and June, 1901, there were 284 interruptions of the line; the line was blown up, trains were stopped or fired into—very often when they contained wounded men and women and children. But during the last three months there has not been a single interruption. Meanwhile, every day a larger area is being cleared of the enemy, and being protected by that iron girdle of blockhouses which Lord Kitchener (applause) has devised, and which are inexorably barring out the Boers from the territory we have occupied and driving them into districts in which our troops, I hope, will be able to find them (laughter and applause).

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

It would be almost impertinent in me to praise Lord Kitchener. Lord Kitchener does not draft sensational despatches (hear, hear). I daresay we all wish sometimes that he wrote at greater length;

but he keeps his own counsels, and I think his countrymen appreciate a great man when they have found him (hear, hear). They recognise the stern resolution, the well-thought-out plan, by which he is successfully dealing with the most difficult task that has ever fallen in modern times to any nation to accomplish. We are proud of the General (applause); we are proud of the Army (applause). To compare any other army to it is to pay the highest compliment in our power. We are proud of their heroic courage. I think we are prouder still of the endurance—the cheerful endurance—which they have shown under the hardships of this exceptional campaign, and we are prouder of the unwavering humanity that, even at great cost to themselves, they have constantly shown to the troops opposed to them and to the civil population which has been at their mercy. We are proud also of our Administrator, proud of Lord Milner (cheers), the great public servant whose labours no man can over-estimate, who, day and night, is working out the great scheme for the regeneration of the new Colonies, who finds men—I do not know whether he knows of them—mean enough in this country to take the opportunity to blacken his character (shame), to call for his recall, to attribute to him motives of the most unworthy character (shame). Gentlemen, he has his reward in the regard and approval of the vast majority of his fellow-citizens (cheers); he has it in the confidence of the Government, the confidence of his Sovereign; and he will not flinch, he will not turn out of his way, because a number of ill-bred curs (great cheers) are barking at his heels. We are proud of him, we are proud of the band of skilful and zealous and patriotic colleagues with whom he is working. As the military operations progress, the Civil Government follows close upon their heels. When peace has been proclaimed we shall find an administration already in our hands. The industry in the two Colonies is reviving (hear, hear). The refugees are returning in great numbers to their homes and their work. Large schemes of development are being devised, and preparation is being made for the resettlement of the land—for the resumption of agricultural operations (hear, hear). That is not all. The obsolete and corrupt legislation of the Transvaal Government has been reviewed. We have wiped the slate clean (loud laughter and applause). That is nothing (laughter). Any schoolboy can do that (laughter). But we have written on the

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† slate that we have cleaned the principles of just and honest government (applause) under which, in the future, the two races may live in mutual respect, enjoying equal rights and equal liberties, and in which that vast population of natives, for which we have become responsible, may receive due protection and consideration (applause). Gentlemen, we are to meet Parliament in a few days. I hope and believe that the temper of Parliament will be the temper of the nation (hear, hear). This is not the time for weak-kneed exhortation or counsels of fear (hear, hear). We have only to imitate the magnificent constancy and resolution of the people of this country and the sturdy patriotism of our Colonies, and we shall achieve a result that will justify the sacrifices that we have made, that will confirm for ever our dominion in South Africa, and will cement the unity of the Empire (loud applause).

On January 14th, 1902, the following letter appeared in *The Standard* :—

“TO THE EDITOR OF ‘THE STANDARD.’

“SIR,—On reading your report in *The Standard* this morning of Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Birmingham, I am strongly impressed with the idea that we owe it to our brave fellows at the front that every one of them should have an opportunity of reading that speech. This would certainly act as an invigorating tonic, and tend to remove the nausea which must have been engendered by the diabolical lies and slanders which filthy mud-splutterers have continuously squirted at them; the effect of which must have been sickening to gallant men, whose every day and night have been a severe test of gallantry and stoical endurance of hardships, which stay-at-home people have no conception of.

“May I suggest that a large number of copies of Mr. Chamberlain's speech, in neat pamphlet form, be immediately struck off, and forwarded in bulk to South Africa, to be there distributed, so that every British soldier should receive a copy. This would not cost much, and I am sure many of Mr. Chamberlain's innumerable friends and admirers will readily provide the necessary funds. I have real pleasure in enclosing you my cheque for two

guineas, as a small beginning, and trust that others will endorse the idea. This would be a little compliment to our inimitable Secretary of State for the Colonies, and would straighten the backs of many of our brave soldiers when the speech was read round the camp fire, after a weary day's march, or, perhaps, read by some invalid, stronger than the rest, to his many sick comrades languishing in our military hospitals.

"Perhaps, if Mr. Chamberlain's Edinburgh speech was included in the pamphlet and Count von Bülow's comments thereon, it would be still more acceptable by our men at the front.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"HENRY COPELAND,

"Agent General for New South Wales.

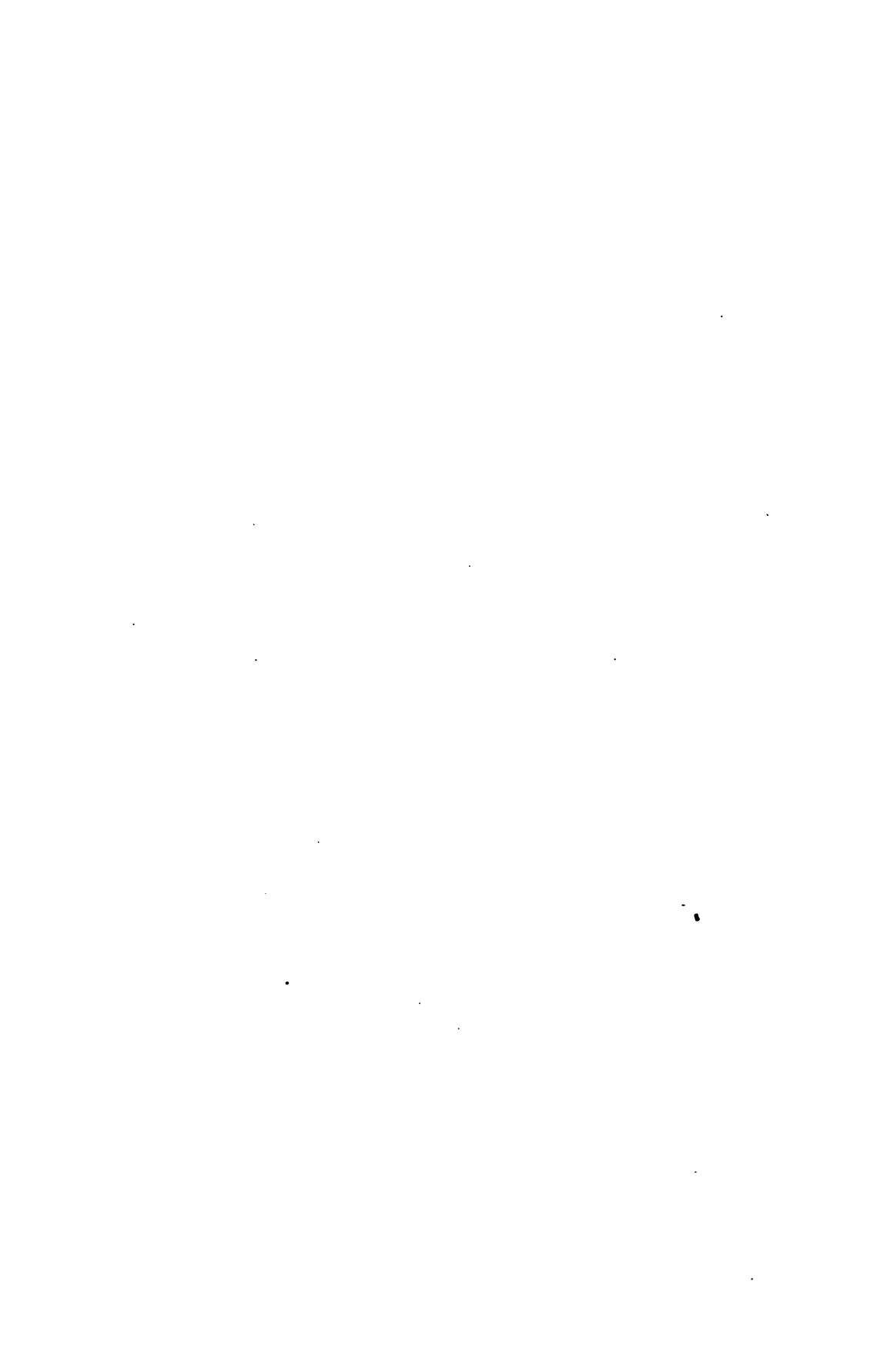
"9, Victoria Street, Westminster, January 13th."

[Subscriptions have since come in sufficient to enable *The Standard* to distribute thirty thousand copies of this pamphlet among the British troops in South Africa.]

N.B.—Copies of this pamphlet for distribution can be had from the Publisher, Mr. JOHN MURRAY, Albemarle Street, at the price of 1d. each net, 5/- net per 100, and 45/- net per 1,000.

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